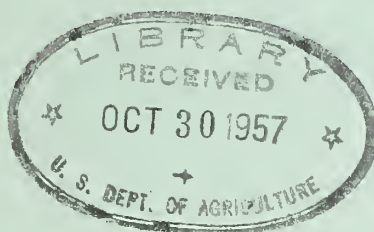


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**THE DEVELOPMENT  
OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS EDUCATION  
IN THE EXTENSION SERVICE**



UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE  
FEDERAL EXTENSION SERVICE  
Washington 25, D. C.

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS EDUCATION  
IN THE EXTENSION SERVICE

BY  
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932710

I. ORIGIN

Without dwelling on the historic role of Extension in early public issues such as tuberculosis control in cattle, Bang's disease, pure seed laws, etc., we will come down to the more recent events which resulted in Extension's adoption of the label of Public Affairs Education.

- A. Immediately following World War II the Association of Land-Grant Colleges and Universities appointed a Committee on Postwar Agricultural Policy. This committee published a report in October 1944. The responsibility of the Land-Grant institutions was recognized in these statements from the report:

- 1/ a. The State agricultural colleges, with their experiment stations and extension services, were created by Federal and State legislation to bring science to agriculture, and education to the service of farming people in particular and the public in general.
- 2/ b. It is not the function of this committee, or of any other similar group, to determine what agricultural policies shall be adopted. That is the responsibility of the nation's citizens.

These are fundamental principles of educational work in public affairs to which extension has scrupulously adhered. In fact the basic principle of adult education, as practiced by Extension, is to develop skills in decision making.

- B. The second document in the development of policy discussion was the report of the committee on Scope of Extension Responsibility prepared by the Federal Extension Service in January 1946. This report said in part:

- 3/ a. From a functional standpoint this responsibility includes (1) the diffusing of information, (2) the development of interest in and recognition of significant problems, (3) the encouragement of planning the best ways and means of solving the problems recognized, whether by individual or group action, and (4) stimulation of appropriate action by people themselves in accordance with the decisions they themselves have reached.
- 4/ b. Emphasis needed in future - if Extension is to meet its responsibilities to the fullest degree possible, to provide farm people with information they need to enable them to present their views actively and constructively whenever decisions are to be made, markedly increased and improved extension work in relation to economic problems and public policies must be provided.

Subsequent to this decision a few States started some of the more experienced workers in this field.

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C. Also in 1946 Secretary Anderson and the Land-Grant College Association appointed a joint committee on Extension Programs, Policies, and Goals. This committee reported in 1948. In this report there was this statement:

- 5/ The need which extension must meet is primarily that of providing basic background information, pointing out why given economic problems have arisen, and what the alternative solutions might be. It is not Extension's function to provide pat answers or solutions. That is the prerogative of the people themselves.

Footnotes:

- 1/ Postward Agricultural Policy - Page 1.  
2/ Postwar Agricultural Policy - Page 3.  
3/ Scope of Extension's Educational Responsibility - Page 3.  
4/ Scope of Extension's Educational Responsibility - Page 5.  
5/ Joint Committee Report on Extension Program Policies and Goals - Page 61.



## II. OBJECTIVES OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS EDUCATION

Organized educational activity in Public Affairs was given further impetus in 1949. A group of State directors and others met in D. C. and adopted the following objectives:

6/ "To develop in individuals:

1. An active interest in Public Affairs' problems.
2. An understanding of the issues and principles involved.
3. The ability to make judgments on the basis of a critical examination of the evidence and logical thinking.
4. A desire to participate effectively in the solution of these problems."

This is a broad charter. Public Affairs Education involves more issues than just farm policy issues. For example, taxation and schools are current critical issues. This field includes the handling of issues where strong prejudice and bias, deeply rooted in tradition, are involved, and where decisions are made.

The 1956 annual conference of State leaders in Public Affairs Education was asked to document their ideas regarding objectives and procedure. Representatives of forty-five States participated. The responses are given below:

"Public affairs considerations go beyond strictly farm policy issues but include such important problems as the functional needs of rural communities. Group educational processes and objectives are to enhance the ability of the individual to think clearly and to make intelligent decisions on public issues."

"Public Affairs Education must start with people where they are and use current economic and social issues as a vehicle for getting interest and attention. This may be referred to as the Opportunist approach. But due caution and safeguards need be taken to study, to analyze, to inform people of the longer-range implications to make sure that decisions with respect to short-term issues are not in conflict with longer-range objectives and ends."

"Over a period of time the extension worker's responsibility is to help provide the analysis and information on which important decisions are to be made. Extension work in this area will take advantage of current issues and assist people with the facts, but in doing so will 'teach' fundamentals - with the objective of raising the level of economic consciousness. Aid is required to help people to recognize any public problems."

"By definition policy involves group decision. These decisions result in laws. If no change in existing law or regulations appertaining thereto is at issues requiring group decisions, no policy education is implied. It then becomes dissemination of information. To the extent that many laws affecting policy are not 'finished' or settled issues, there must be continuing education and analysis to keep improving and developing."

"Since most laws, as well as the regulations appertaining thereto, are subject to change and have issues involved, public affairs education at this point continues to exist. Problems of a current law or issue may mean a need for continued information."

"There is no limit to such discussion except as to resources available. If interest in a particular public problem is rejected by specialized interest or public interest, there is continued opportunity to help leaders and people to more carefully look at the problem."

"The primary job is to assist with making sound decisions. The actual implementation should be carried out through farm organizations, local commissions, or committees with specialists assisting in an advisory capacity."

"It is appropriate to discuss any and all issues unless the local conditions indicate no contribution can be made. Discussion will be governed by time, place, audience, competence of individual, information available, and discretion."

"Extension may work on controversial issues and furnish facts and not opinions to help people make policy decisions on their own accord. Whenever possible, discussion should precede policy decisions. There are ~~not~~ any real issues on which you cannot discuss the economic implication."

"Make no attempt to resolve 'right' and 'wrong'. The goal is enlightened public action; therefore, the extension worker's job is always directed at improved opinion."

"Included in the responsibility in public affairs education is an explanation of alternative means of achieving action. There should be a continuing program of information of general economic nature. Public Affairs Education needs to start as soon as there is evidence of a situation and continue education until a decision is made."



### III. PHILOSOPHY OF PUBLIC AFFAIRS EDUCATION

1. Extension education in public affairs expects to produce the same result we strive for in all the other fields of extension teaching. We expect the individual to arrive at an informed independent decision based on his own interpretation of facts.

2. This type of education involves not only the giving of facts but also the principles giving rise to these facts. But it is much more than a matter of adding up facts. In many instances the facts are hard to come by. There may be only strongly held opinions. It is important to teach how to analyze facts and weigh opinions in considering alternatives presented as solutions to problems. It is necessary to present the alternatives and attempt to analyze the consequences of each.

3. It differs from other extension teaching in two respects. In the first place in the fields of the physical sciences the know how is established by research and it is the function of extension to make these facts known. In public affairs even the best research does not establish the answers. The decisions one reaches are influenced much more by his values. In the second place in the physical sciences the results expected are improvement in production skills. Public affairs education is concerned with producing changes in knowledge and attitudes rather than skills. The word public implies group decisions rather than individual. Individual judgment is tempered by one's fundamental values. Therefore, educational work in public affairs precludes the teacher advocating a course of action. Most all group decisions involve compromise. Hence the teacher in public affairs must not only possess tolerance and respect for the values and the beliefs of others, he must teach it.

4. Techniques in dealing successfully with controversial issues differ from the methods commonly used in other lines of extension work. The job of extension in this area is not to present the answers. The task is to develop techniques and skills that work successfully within sound teaching principles.

5. The present complex yet interdependent relationship of the different segments of our economic system makes it particularly imperative that agriculture maintain a constant awareness of the movements in the rest of the economy. Since the effects of these movements on agriculture are inescapable, it is important that policy makers be constantly aware of them. 7/

6. Due to the substitution of capital for labor in agricultural production, the farmer is decidedly a minority group in policy making. To exercise influence on public policy proportionate to their importance in the national economy, agricultural relationships to other segments of the economy must be kept constantly in mind. "It is important that agriculture have an educational program that interprets its problems and goals to labor, industry and urban groups. In turn, farmers should be more sympathetic to the aspirations of nonagricultural groups. - - - - Agricultural policies need to be increasingly formulated from the standpoint of their impact upon the national economy and not exclusively in terms of the interests of farmers." 7/

7. The leader in Public Affairs Education must decide what approach to take with the groups with whom the work is being done. The presently accepted aims start first with creating interest - the desire - then skills in participation in decision making on public issues. Extension workers are then charged with the (goals) responsibility of developing the ability to make judgments on the basis of critical examination of the evidence and logical thinking. These are social processes. They must be a part of the plan. They can

be achieved while engaged in the fourth objective - developing an understanding of the issues and principles involved. It is possible to create an understanding of the issues without creating an interest, desire, and skill in effective participation in decision making. To do so is to fail. The learner must be able to put what he learns in practice before the teaching is complete. Since public affairs involve group action, the learner must constantly remember that his opportunity to use what he has learned lies in the social economic, political or religious groups, such as service clubs, farm organizations, churches, etc., to which he belongs.

8. The leaders must decide what group or groups in the social structure will be reached. Will they be the masses? Will the approach be directed to farmers or farm leaders - to men or women, or both? Will the effort seek to influence the opinion leaders, officers of organized groups, or leading citizens? Decision in this respect will determine the type of material to present as well as the indirect spread.

Years ago Liberty Hyde Bailey described the basic philosophy of this activity when he said: "The wealth of Democracy lies in its people, not in its government or its goods. The product of democracy is self-acting men and women. The well being and progress of society requires that every citizen of whatever age, may have the opportunity to discover himself and to make use of himself largely in his own way. Any theory of the state as the end of society or as the motive of government leads away from democracy as darkness leads away from light. It may be said that the state can bequeath privileges to its people and can develop the highest form of prosperity. Very good. Yet its very perfection is its condemnation; its strength is its weakness; and it will explode of its own pressure. The citizen must be able to think for himself in other than terms of the state."

9. Extension is engaged in this activity on these assumptions:

a. The welfare of a democracy depends upon the education of its citizens - that the common man, given the facts and the tools for analysis, will make intelligent decisions.

b. That there is general recognition that public affairs have important impacts upon the welfare of rural people and upon the development of a sound, satisfactory agricultural economy.

c. That farm people are interested in this general subject, and are seeking understanding as to how public policies are made and their effects and implications upon their welfare, and how they may influence policy decisions.

d. That Land-Grant Colleges (and the Extension Service) as public educational institutions, have an important obligation in this area and an opportunity to serve the best interests of the people in the problem area of public affairs.

7/ Agriculture and Political Process, E. A. Engelbert, Increasing Understanding of Public Problems and Policies, 1953.



#### IV. SUBJECT MATTER

The subject matter attempts to (1) describe the problem, (2) note the alternative solutions, (3) indicate some of the probable consequences. Group decisions are not sought. Individuals are encouraged to make their own decisions. It is in reality citizenship training because the decisions are made in their respective groups, organizations, or political parties.

The entire State staff should be involved. Staff members must be encouraged to consider policy issues. First they are all involved as citizens, and second as specialists in specific subject matter areas as resource people. The obligation is to involve them in considering the issues, to inform them of what is being done, to obtain their cooperation and understanding of its importance and relation to their work.

It is a teamwork job wherever their subject matter is involved. It is important to create the feeling that work with other State staff members is a two-way street. In some cases this might be done by making this an advisory committee of staff members regarding subject matter. They need to discuss issues partly to avoid misunderstandings as well as to become better informed on matters of economic significance. It is best to discuss issues with the staff as a group. This also encourages teamwork at the county level in dealing with policy.

There exists a responsibility to get appropriate material to other specialists. Also working as teams often affords opportunities for better understanding of subject matter and enables listening specialists to learn the importance that the public attaches to the policy issue under consideration.

State leaders in public affairs education should conduct inservice training schools, and assist with county meetings. Methods as well as subject matter must be taught.

County agents should be encouraged to take advantage of summer school scholarships for this training and stimulate them to put this training to use following the course. The agents should be furnished with subject matter relating to the issues being considered.

Farm organization leaders and other groups may help direct the agents' interests by channeling their requests through the county office.

The problem of servicing interested groups is one of many variables. Because of the newness of this field of extension endeavor, some initiative is required on the part of the State leaders. When his availability as a resource person becomes known, it then becomes a problem of allocation of time.

To be able to function properly in any situation, it is necessary first to identify the problem about which there is a public interest. The alternative solutions or actions must then be determined and analyzed. With a given number of alternatives as many facts as can be found must be assembled in order to form a basis for intelligent consideration by the public. Subject matter or the presentation of these facts will vary with the group. The groups might be identified in a few general classes such as - radio listeners, TV viewers, and the reading public. Material for such groups is generally designed to arouse interest. Laborious detailed explanations are inappropriate. Commercial groups will have mixed interest varying from none to intense personal economic welfare. Farm groups are generally the ones most frequently contacted and they are intensely interested in a thorough understanding of the issue. Many of the organized women's groups are also willing to pursue a subject with a greater degree of intensity.

Because of the variety of groups and the intensity and motive of interest and the circumstances under which the subject is to be presented, methods will vary. The function in working with groups is that of analyzing the proposals and alternatives in such a manner that the participants will be stimulated to consider the facts and arrive at informed conclusions based on their own set of values.

#### PREPARING SUBJECT MATTER

##### A. For Discussion Groups

1. Title. Some prefer a challenging question rather than a prosaic statement of the subject, viz: "Can we control inflation?" rather than "Inflation."
2. Define the problem so as to give some direction to the scope of the discussion. If possible, relate the topic to the objectives of society.
3. Background 1/
  - a. Why is it a problem? -- causes -- economic considerations -- history.
  - b. What alternative solutions are being considered?
  - c. What are the possible or probable consequences of each alternative?
4. Some leading questions to stimulate discussion.

##### B. For H. D. Unit Lessons

1. Title
2. Your objective
3. What the leader should get out of the lesson
4. The lesson - subject matter
5. How to present it. (Presenting the lesson)

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1/ Some topics are such that prepared material would stop with (a) and the audience probed for (b) and (c).

## V. HOW SOME STATES DO IT

There are numerous methods of doing public affairs education. What is done in a single State will be determined by the available time of competent leadership or by the help a part time worker can secure from the resident staff. In the beginning each person assigned this responsibility wants some activity that will reward him with a feeling of accomplishment.

Perhaps a minimum goal should be to see that all county workers have sufficient understanding of the current problems to facilitate intelligent counseling. They will be asked. They should not contribute to the confusion or spreading misinformation. In such case there is a choice of how to inform them. It is possible to furnish them timely articles which identify the important problems and point out the consequences of alternative solutions. Or district training schools for county agents can be arranged. This process offers opportunity for questions and discussions which will improve their understanding.

If there is a desire to reach the public directly, mass media may be employed. Articles can be prepared for the press and material developed for radio and TV presentation. If time and staff facilities permit county meetings can be arranged by the county agents.

### INDIANA HAS AN INTENSIVE PROGRAM

The extension service in Indiana has perhaps the largest program of district, county, and community meetings of any State. This State has four highly skilled leaders who work part time in this area. They are J. Carroll Bottum, J. B. Kohlmeyer, J. O. Dunbar, and R. H. Bauman. Their philosophy and procedure is ably described by Mr. Bottum in the December 1955 Journal of Farm Economics and by Mr. Dunbar in the 1953 and 1956 reports of the National Farm Policy Conference.

Mr. Bottum says that the economist must be able to separate clearly the part that economics plays and the part that noneconomic values play in solving public problems. He says, "people's decisions, opinions or judgments concerning public problems are based on their beliefs and their values. In expressing their opinions people express both their beliefs and their values at the same time. Usually they do not distinguish between what they think they know and what they like or dislike. Nevertheless, this is the basis of decisions in the public policy area. In our educational process we must recognize the basis of their judgments and be prepared to treat each of them properly because they require different approaches. The public policy worker is beyond his science when he attempts to change these values for individuals except in so far as a clearer understanding of economic concepts may influence the individual's values."

"There are two distinct functions in policy," says Mr. Bottum, "(1) decision making and (2) action to get the decision carried out. Education can make the major contribution in the decision making area. It is largely the function of pressure organizations to rally the people around certain policies and obtain action."

These highly skilled Indiana specialists have made the fundamental decisions which must precede any program. They, who do the teaching, have decided what people they will try to reach and the media to be used. This decision concerns the present and does not rule out other groups or media. But their principal effort for the present is directed toward groups of "people who do the hard thinking." To quote Mr. Kohlmeyer they do not ask for the organization officers or agency committees as such.



Since their time is limited, they prefer to reach the "king-makers instead of the kings." These groups are selected by the county agents. The meetings are on an invitational basis. They may be all men, all women, or mixed groups, depending upon the social customs in the county. However, they do not encourage man and wife groups. In beginning the work in a county, they work with the innovators and "early adopters." One would call these leader training meetings although the leaders are not expected to conduct formal follow-up meetings on their own initiative.

Their method of originating county requests is through the Agricultural Economics sub-committee of the county program planning committee. This sub-committee decides what economic educational activity, of which public affairs is one, will be requested for the county program each year.

Their objective is to create understanding with the feeling that as people begin to understand the issues, the alternative solutions will be reduced. These leaders are considered to be informal educators - at school meetings - at sales - at church or wherever people get together.

The method of conducting these meetings requires skill in group discussion techniques. Discussions are generally about two hours in length and divided into four steps:

1. The problem. What is the situation that needs to be corrected? Why is it a problem? Why should you be concerned? How does it affect you?
2. The alternative solutions.
3. What are the significant economic consequences or effects of each alternative?
4. Discussion huddles and feed back in which participants combine their values with the beliefs presented and express their judgments.

Audience participation is secured in all of the first three phases by getting them to supply as much of the information as possible from their beliefs. The blackboard is the principal assist in this process. Every idea is recorded regardless of the leader's opinion of its significance. Mr. Kohlmeyer aptly describes this process as "probe, pull, and fill in." By filling in he means that the specialist supplies additional information asked for as the discussion progresses. In this process free use is made of visuals such as charts, graphs, and some statistical tables when necessary. All of the pertinent information is mimeographed for distribution at the appropriate time - but never in advance.

In 1957 one topic discussed was Economic Progress. The discussion was carried from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. The problem presented was "what rate of economic growth should be encouraged?" In handling this topic the first hour was devoted to getting the groups to define progress, and to discussing what determines how much economic progress we have, and how much progress have we had. The second hour was used in considering the cost of progress by such questions as "Who gets hurt when farms get larger?" What has happened to agriculture since 1920? What happens when an industry moves from New England to the South? Does legislation stop, slow down, or cushion adjustment? The rest of the time is given to discussion huddles and feed back. The questions given the huddles are, (1) "How much progress do you want and at what rate," and (2) "what determinants will get the rate of progress you want - which ones should be emphasized?"

This meeting is handled by a team of two and it is a day's work. No resolutions are ever passed. The groups are always instructed that their individual judgments count most in the organizations to which they belong.

#### IOWA TRAINS COUNTY STAFFS

The Iowa Extension Service under the leadership of Wallace Ogg has conducted the most extensive program of any State in training agents in this field. A description of their procedure is considered appropriate for those who prefer to place major emphasis on agents' training.

The basic assumption in this training program is that the reaction of agents, to public affairs education, will be similar to their reaction to any other extension activity.

- a. Some will desire only enough information to enable them to counsel intelligently.
- b. Some will want training in using their available resources in conducting a program in the county if requested to do so by the people.
- c. Others who have direct teaching ability will be willing to conduct a program on their own initiative with limited specialist help.
- d. There will be some with more than average interest and ability who will desire and receive special training.

The beginning of the Iowa program of training county extension staff resulted from a request by agents in the State for a refresher course in the social sciences similar to frequent courses in the production fields. In the winter of 1950 a week's training was conducted for the whole extension staff in basic subject matter for educational programs in the social sciences and especially public affairs. The time at the training conference was about equally divided between periods of presentation and periods of discussion in small groups to digest the material presented.

After this training conference a good many of the Iowa county extension staff began to develop confidence to attempt some work at the county level on their own and the whole staff accepted the idea that it was the responsibility of the extension service to have a program in public affairs.

Iowa extension procedure for inservice training provides for four district meetings per year in addition to the annual conference for all agents. With administrative backing it was not difficult to include public affairs education in some of these meetings. The objective in these meetings for all agents is (1) to develop an understanding of a public issue sufficient for effective counseling, and (2) to develop an understanding of how to prepare a plan of work and conduct a county program, and (3) to make available special training at a later date to agents who are capable and interested in expanding their efforts in this direction in response to increased demands from the county.

The special 1-day training program is arranged for small groups of county personnel (2 to 5 counties) on an enrollment basis. At these training schools the agents are trained in subject matter, visual aids and procedure that will enable them to conduct local educational meetings in a single county without further help from the State leader.



When a county is carrying a major emphasis in this field much follow up is required on the part of the State leader to assist with selecting visuals, checking and correcting subject matter and methods. Usually the county staff will go home from the training school and prepare their material and check it with the State leader, try it out in one meeting and then revise it. The leader is always available to clear up questions arising in the first meeting which the agents felt they did not handle to their own satisfaction.

#### OHIO COMBINES OUTLOOK AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Ohio is another State which does effective public affairs education with a limited amount of personnel. Beginning in 1958 they will probably be able to devote one man year to this work although they have three who will participate. Although they do combine policy and outlook to a large extent they also have some work devoted wholly to public affairs.

At the State office the leadership in public affairs education is organized in a most appropriate manner. There is a college advisory committee with the State leader of public affairs education, Riley S. Dougan, as chairman. Other members of the committee are the chairman of the Department of Agricultural Economics and Rural Sociology, the Extension director, a district supervisor of county agents, a supervisor of home economics extension, a specialist in rural sociology, a county agricultural agent, a home economics agent, a dairy production specialist, a public affairs specialist and the extension program director. This committee meets annually in the spring to plan the program for the following year. They have other meetings during the year as occasion requires. The three individuals directly responsible for the work are Riley S. Dougan, Wallace Barr, and Margaret F. McDonald. The last named person prepares much of the material. The other two do the field work.

At the present time Ohio uses a number of media with a considerable degree of effectiveness. They make extensive use of publications in getting out information on public affairs. They have excellent cooperation from the resident staff on these publications, but the extension workers prepare most of the policy material. Econogram is a weekly sheet devoted to "highlights in economics and public affairs relating to agriculture." Timely Economic Information is a monthly four page job which contains articles on current problems including public affairs issues. For discussion groups the specialists prepare leaflets called "Let's Discuss."

Ohio has one situation which is different from most States. There are a number of "community institutes" which are a carry over from the old farmers institutes of early extension days. The State also has a "leader in special projects" (which includes community institutes). Through this media much work can be done with a minimum amount of effort on the part of the State leaders in public affairs.

A second media for leadership training is found in an annual meeting of all farm organization leaders called by the college. This is a meeting considering economic information and public affairs. Participants in this meeting are on the regular mailing list to receive the regular and special publications.

One farm organization in the State has "local councils." These are composed of about eight families that meet regularly in the homes of the group. With these permanently organized groups the job of aiding in supplying materials for discussion is larger than in most States but it is compensating.

The State attempts to keep the county agents informed and to develop their competence by district training conferences. These are usually an intensive presentation of one subject.

As in other States, these specialists fill many speaking dates for county agents before special groups such as service clubs, chambers of commerce and farm groups.

#### MICHIGAN TRAINS LEADERS AND COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS

Art Mauch is leader of the Michigan project and has worked in this area since the inception of the program about 10 years ago.

The Michigan program has grown until it embodies a very broad approach of:

1. Creating general awareness, interest, and knowledge of issues.
2. Training county agents.
3. Servicing Home Demonstration Units.
4. Training young farm leaders in public affairs issues and basic economic principles.

#### General Education

In creating general awareness, mass media and public meetings are used extensively. In 1956, TV was used to present 16-seven minute shows; 64 articles were published, 24 of these in a "Michigan Farmer" column called "Straight from the Shoulder," the others were carried in the "Michigan Farmer" and "Michigan Farm Economics." Three hundred nineteen general meetings commanded a total attendance of 33,000; while 140 leader training meetings or small workshops reached 2900 people. Also, the latest effort in this area is the production of two-29 minute movies entitled, "One Man's Meat" and "The Magic Formula" with 6 more scheduled to be used on TV and by high school groups, service clubs, etc. These will be available for rental or purchase after September, 1957.

#### Agent Training

The training and involvement of county agents in this program was launched early in its development. Agents were given the opportunity to enroll in a course for graduate credit. This course consisted of 32 hours of class instruction and was given in districts covering the State on week-ends. Different members of the staff gave the course in the different districts. Most of the agents took advantage of this opportunity.

The agents have also been encouraged to take the Public Affairs course offered in the four Extension Summer Schools the past seven years.

Agents are kept current subject-matter-wise through the general releases and district training conferences conducted by the specialists.

#### Home Demonstration Units

Community leaders in home demonstration work, prompted by the lack of interest on the part of the public in civil defense and in foreign policy, asked for a series of training meetings on the subject. Extension specialists in public affairs joined hands with the Michigan Office of Civil Defense, the Air Force and local agencies to present the material and to train leaders in the techniques of relaying it to people in their own communities.



In addition to a brief discussion of the American economic system, special aspects of foreign policy related to civil defense and specific training for defense were covered. Lesson guides were prepared with visuals etc., and these leaders presented the material at 250 local meetings in 1956 with a cumulative audience of 3,800 women.

They have expressed a desire for continuance of lessons on public affairs issues and it is expected that this phase of the program will continue to expand.

#### Young Farmers

The latest, and Michigan feels one of the most significant, phases of its program started last year. This was the intensive training of young farm leaders.

Twelve half-day Farm Policy Workshops were held in conjunction with the short course program at Michigan State University. The specialist worked with approximately 60 carefully selected young Michigan farmers. Training and discussion centered around such things as the function of price in the economy, the role of government in Agriculture, levels and methods of price supports, conservation and water rights, and part-time farming.

Workshop members made presentations themselves, "elected" a Secretary of Agriculture, and drew up an agricultural program as part of their training in seeing how democracy works in the formulation of agricultural policy. Many of the students led active discussions in their own groups, when they returned home. Some even prepared visual material to help convey their ideas.

The interest in this workshop led to requests to set up regional farm policy workshops in several four-or five-county areas this winter. These all day meetings were held one day a week covering a 6-week period in Sandusky, Midland, Ann Arbor, Fremont, Paw Paw, and Marshall. From 25 to 60 progressive young farmers attended each workshop.

A typical schedule for these leaders training schools (they call them workshops) covers 6 full days. The meetings are scheduled about a week apart. Two extension or university staff members are the resource people. Eight college men were involved in the meetings this year. District extension supervisors arrange the meeting schedules and one of the county agents is chairman of each meeting.

Some of the subjects covered in the 1957 schools were Government and Agriculture, Population and Technocracy, Levels of Price Support, Parity, Methods of Price Support, Farm Management, Foreign Trade, Milk Prices, The Detroit Market, The Role of Coops., The Low Income and Part Time Farmers, What you can and can't do with Marketing. The last meeting covered 20th Century Citizenship and the Agricultural Revolution, and the groups took a look at the next ten years.

Interest has been keen and the students have requested that the workshops be continued with additional issues discussed next year. Also that workshops be set up for new enrollees next year.

The county agents select the enrollees for these workshops. The district supervisors are starting an evaluation of the process.

Dr. Mauch and Director Miller feel that this will be an effective means of raising



the level of economic consciousness of not only these leaders, but all of those who associate with them in their local communities.

It is apparent that Michigan has an ambitious program made possible by the full time services of two specialists, adequate financial resources, and strong support from the administration and resident staff.

## VI. PERSONNEL

A. State Project Leaders - State leaders should be men with good training in the social sciences, who are not "answer men," who know how or can be trained to lead discussions and stimulate participation. At present the supply of qualified men is limited. It is imperative that State program directors anticipate a growing demand for this type of leadership and encourage likely young recruits to prepare themselves for these opportunities. They are not peculiar to Extension. There is a growing trend to group activities in all segments of society.

### B. Training County Staff.

1. In-Service-Training. - Leaders in the county will come to the county agents for information about public affairs relating to their welfare. The county agent should be able to conduct an informed conversation on some of the more prominent issues without prejudice. Since we all have a certain amount of bias, objectivity is a skill. H. B. James of North Carolina says "it may be well to explain your own background and experiences in the beginning rather than to hide behind an assumed air of objectivity. The pretense of objectivity is often proof that objectivity does not exist."

In a given State the interest and academic training of county agents will vary. However, we should expect any county extension worker to be able to adapt to the demand of the times occasioned by increasing numbers of social and economic problems of a complex society. It is the function of the State leader of Public Affairs Education to supply all county personnel with sufficient background that they will be able to function intelligently in counseling with those who will come to them for information. The Extension Service certainly does not want our agents contributing to the confusion and bias which is encountered in the consideration of every controversial subject. It is better that our agents be never asked if they cannot talk intelligently about the issues. And we know they will be asked. Although some agents may never be willing to attempt to conduct meetings on the issues without outside aid, they all need to possess an awareness of the problems.

2. Advanced Study. - Opportunity is afforded for training in this field at Extension Summer Schools. As of January 1, 1957, 812 county agents had taken these 3-week courses. The Farm Foundation provides 100 scholarships annually for this study.

There is need for more intensive preparation for leadership in this field. On April 1, 1957, the Fund for Adult Education offered approximately 30 grants to individuals for practical experience, university study, or a combination of the two, in liberal education for adults. The offer stresses education for adults in world affairs, political affairs, economics and the humanities broadly defined. Each award will be in an amount adequate for the recipient to accomplish the program of training and education for which the grant is made.

## VII. PROGRAM PROJECTION AND PUBLIC AFFAIRS EDUCATION

State leaders in P. A. E. can be of valuable assistance as resource persons in county program projection. This may have to be done at the State level in two ways, (1) helping State leaders in program planning acquire a comprehensive understanding of social, economic, and political issues and trends beyond the county borders, (2) preparing analyses of the public issues and relating them to the present local situations. A county program developed without these considerations will be unrealistic to some degree. C. E. Kellogg, SCS, once said "land use planning in an economic vacuum and economic planning in a land use vacuum compete with each other for uselessness in the solution of farm problems."

## VIII. PUBLIC AFFAIRS DISCUSSION GUIDE

### A. The Aims of Extension

To develop understanding by pointing out:

The importance of the problem.

The essential facts (background).

The alternative solutions.

The probable consequences, and stimulating the group to think and exchange ideas about the subject.

The relation of the problem to the aims of society.

### B. Planning For the Discussion Meeting

1. With the exception of home demonstration unit lessons, public affairs discussion meetings require special planning to assure attendance. Effective participation is best secured under the auspices of a sponsoring group. This may be a farm organization, a civic group or the Extension Council. Circular letters and routine meeting notices alone are unsatisfactory. Some assigned leadership responsibility is needed.
2. There needs to be a discussion chairman.
3. Some resource person is needed to present the background. He may be a county agent, a trained leader, or a local professional person.
4. The time available will determine the limits of the discussion.
5. Less than 1 hour will produce little constructive discussion. Two hours is about the maximum unless it is a leaders' training meeting. A well-planned leaders' training meeting can profitably occupy a day.
6. The most productive meetings provide for presenting background, huddle discussions, feed back and summary.

### C. Physical Arrangements

1. A discussion session requires an atmosphere of informality. Table seating is conducive to good participation.
2. Row seating, particularly if seats are immovable, should be avoided. A court room is most unsatisfactory.
3. Lighting and heating should consider the comfort of participants.
4. Cliques may be avoided by numbering off process.

#### D. Procedure

1. Table introductions are important if the participants are not all acquainted.
2. The chairman introduces the subject by stressing the relation to local needs or problems; offering all equal opportunity to express their ideas; stating that no vote will be taken on conclusions.
3. The background statement should be short and unbiased. It should present the known facts, the alternative solutions and probable consequences of each.
4. Background statements may be read, presented by a panel or some other resource person.
5. Four or five minutes may be allowed for questions to clear up facts.
6. Huddle groups are instructed to record some opinions or raise questions.
7. Each small group needs a chairman and a recorder.
8. Fifteen to 30 minutes are allowed for huddles depending on the size of the problem under discussion.
9. Report back from huddle groups should allow questions or opinions from the entire group on each report.
10. The chairman or resource person should summarize by bringing out the areas of agreement and disagreement. No attempt should be made to reconcile differences of opinions from group reports.

#### E. Statewide Forums

Statewide forums are institutional in character. That is, they require the administrative sponsorship of the college. A budget of two or three thousand dollars is needed to get the talent, advertise and print a report. They should be planned by a committee of the institution appointed by the President. Commercial and civic interests concerned with the problem to be considered should be invited to assist with the planning. Planning should start a year in advance of the forum dates. To be successful a forum must provide time for audience participation. This cannot be done in one day.

The mechanics of a forum involving 400 to 600 people are complex. The organization plans include such jobs as budget, program, editing, and publishing the report, physical facilities, discussion group organization and procedure, registration and publicity.







